From the Director's Desk

With great pleasure the National Gallery looks forward to the opening of *The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: Selected Works.* For almost five decades, through their remarkable acuity, exhaustive study, and close relationships with the artists, the Meyerhoffs amassed one of the world's outstanding collections of postwar art. We are deeply grateful that this great collection has been promised, and many works already donated, to the Gallery, and are excited that much of it will soon be on view to the public in the upcoming exhibition.

One of the Gallery's great masterworks, *The Old Musician,* 1862, by Edouard Manet, has spent more than two years undergoing extensive treatment in our conservation lab. Thick layers of discolored varnish have been removed, returning one of Manet's most ambitious early works to its original vibrant state. The story of this remarkable transformation is detailed in this issue's feature article, written by Kimberly Jones, associate curator of French paintings, and Ann Hoenigswald, senior conservator of paintings.

This issue also celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of CASVA, the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts. Founded in 1979 with its own distinguished board of advisors from universities and museums throughout the country, CASVA sponsors the study of the visual arts through fellowships, research, publications, and scholarly meetings. The Center draws on the spectrum of the Gallery's resources but is not limited to the study of areas represented in the collection. CASVA focuses on the full scope of the visual arts, including architecture, urban design, photography, and film. Thanks to the generosity and vision of Robert H. Smith over the past decade, CASVA is now able to offer professors, fellows, and visiting fellows living arrangements within walking distance from the Gallery.

CASVA organized a colloquy earlier this year to study *The Old Musician* and discuss discoveries made during its conservation. Such opportunities are vital for the development of a new generation of art historians, scholars, curators, and conservation scientists, and CASVA is extraordinarily well placed within the Gallery to take advantage of these possibilities. Elizabeth Cropper, dean of CASVA, will be reporting on this meeting and other aspects of the Center in this and future issues of the *Bulletin.*

It is my pleasure to inform *Bulletin* readers that Mary L. Levkoff has joined the Gallery as curator of sculpture and decorative arts. Formerly curator of European sculpture and classical antiquities at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Mary is a respected and dynamic scholar. I am also pleased to report that Nancy Anderson, an outstanding art historian and a member of the Gallery's curatorial team for more than twenty years, has been named head of the department of American and British paintings.

Earl A. Powell III

Shedding New Light on

Fig. 1. Edouard Manet, *The Old Musician,* 1862, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Chester Dale Collection

The Old Musician

• Kimberly Jones, *Associate Curator of French Paintings,* and Ann Hoenigswald, *Senior Conservator of Paintings*

The Old Musician, 1862, one of Edouard Manet's (1832–1883) most important early works, has long fascinated both scholars and more casual viewers (fig. 1). Its monumentality and ambiguity, and above all the curious disjunction among the figures and their setting, give the painting a tantalizing air of mystery. A gift of Chester Dale, the painting has been on display at the Gallery since 1941. In 2006, at the urging of the late Philip Conisbee, senior curator of European paintings and head of French paintings, *The Old Musician* began undergoing a major conservation treatment. Two and a half years later, the work has been dramatically transformed, as layers of heavy, yellowed varnish have been removed to reveal what is essentially the canvas as completed by the great French master. Equally exciting is the new information about this painting and Manet's creative process that has come to light as a result of this treatment.

The Old Musician holds a unique place in Manet's oeuvre. It was the artist's first successful large-scale, multifigural composition. Prior to 1862, Manet's efforts had focused primarily on creating single-figure compositions, beginning with his first major work, *The Absinthe Drinker*, c. 1859 (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen), a painting that was created for—but ultimately rejected by—the Paris Salon in 1859 (fig. 2). Other works of similar scale and format soon followed, among them *Portrait of Madame Brunet*, 1860, *Boy with a Dog*, 1860–1861 (both Private Collection), and *The Spanish Singer*, 1860 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), the painting that earned Manet his first critical success when it was shown at the Salon of 1861.

Manet's early attempts at producing larger and more complex compositions proved equally problematic. His first grandiose composition, *The Surprised Nymph*, 1859–1861, was an exercise in trial and error. The composition was reworked repeatedly and its subject was altered more than once. Although it was exhibited at the Imperial Academy in Saint Petersburg in 1861 under the title *Nymph and Satyr* (the satyr was subsequently painted out), it was later cut down, leaving behind a single fragment of the seated nymph (Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires). Manet's painting *The Gitanos*, 1862, met a similar fate. Cut down sometime after 1867, the once large composition now exists in the form of three smaller fragments (one in the Art Institute of Chicago and two recently acquired by the Louvre-Abu Dhabi). That *The Old Musician* survived intact is testimony to the artist's satisfaction with the final result, no small achievement given Manet's perfectionism.

The Old Musician is undeniably an impressive work. Its scale (at more than 6 by 8 feet, it is one of the largest canvases the artist ever undertook), combined with the monumentality of the figures, suggests that it was created as a showpiece, presumably for the Paris

Fig. 2. Edouard Manet, *The Absinthe Drinker,* c. 1859, oil on canvas, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen

Salon, though the painting was never submitted for exhibition there. Like so many of Manet's early works, the painting resonates with allusions to artistic tradition and the old masters he so admired and on occasion quoted. The grouping of the figures seems to echo the peasant paintings of the Le Nain brothers. The boy with the white shirt recalls Antoine Watteau's figure of the sad clown, *Pierrot*, 1718–1719 (Musée du Louvre, Paris); the seated musician is reminiscent of classical sculptures Manet studied in the Louvre. Even the grapevines that frame the upper left corner of the painting have their origins in the art of the past, in Diego Velázquez's renowned painting *The Drinkers*, 1628–1629 (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid).

Spanish art in general and the work of Velázquez in particular served as a powerful touchstone for Manet's art in the early 1860s. Although he had not yet traveled to Spain (he first visited Madrid in 1865), Manet was fascinated by Spanish art and the traits it embodied: naturalism, anticlassicism, and a fluid, bravura handling of paint. These traits are very much on display in *The Old Musician*. Despite a somewhat muted palette overall—another Spanish characteristic—the paint application has a tremendous vibrancy, ranging from thin washes of color in the background to the richer impasto in the shirt of the young boy, the faces and hands of the figures, and the foreground of the composition. The variety and subtlety of this handling are extraordinary, especially in Manet's ability to emulate distinct textures: the gossamer sheerness of the little girl's skirt, the soft linen of the boy's shirt compared to the coarser weave of his homespun trousers, and the heavy woolen folds of the musician's cloak, each of which is rendered perfectly. In terms of paint application, the picture is a true tour de force.

One of *The Old Musician*'s most distinctive and perplexing elements is the figure of the man in the top hat at the far right of the composition. He is immediately recognizable as the same figure that appeared in Manet's earlier painting, *The Absinthe Drinker*. The inclusion of an essentially urban type, that of a *chiffonier*, or ragpicker, in what seems to be a rural environment, is unexpected. More curious still is the fact that Manet copied a figure from an earlier work and inserted him into this later painting, seemingly at random. Although Manet often quoted other sources, the introduction of a figure from his own work is without precedent. Within this new context, the figure seems even more alien. His identifying attributes, the bottle and the glass of absinthe, have been stripped away, making him appear disconnected. With no wall against which to half-lean, half-sit, the figure now seems to float, a detached observer of the scene before him.

Fig. 3. Edouard Manet, *The Man in the Tall Hat*, 1858/1859, watercolor and graphite, National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection

Fig. 4. Edouard Manet, *The Absinthe Drinker (Le buveur d'absinthe)*, 1862, etching, state ii/iii, National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection

The figure of the absinthe drinker seems to have held personal significance for Manet, for he returned to the subject several times in the course of just a few years. In addition to the painting in Copenhagen, he also produced a watercolor, *The Man in the Tall Hat* (fig. 3), an etching, *The Absinthe Drinker* (fig. 4), and a pen-and-ink drawing, *The Absinthe Drinker* (Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington, Connecticut), but it is the etching of the figure that is most compelling. This etching was included in a suite of eight that was published by the editor Alfred Cadart in 1862, at the very time Manet was at work on *The Old Musician*. The suite contained a half-length depiction of the young girl standing on the left of the musician; it is the only print Manet ever produced based on any figure from *The Old Musician* (fig. 5). The reasons behind Manet's fascination with the absinthe drinker remain unknown. Although some scholars have attempted to read this figure as a symbolic self-portrait, Manet's iconography is typically too fluid and unconventional to make such a literal interpretation convincing.

The subject of the painting is puzzling and highly ambiguous. The motley group—three adults and three children, one of whom holds a baby in her arms—arrayed across the picture plane is dressed in tattered, ill-fitting, and somewhat mismatched apparel, suggesting poverty. The precise relationship among the figures is unclear: they seem to have no connection to one another, nor do they share a line of sight. Only the titular musician, with his grizzled gray beard and kind eyes, connects with the viewer, inviting us into the tableau Manet has presented.

The oddness of the composition is underscored by the setting. The group is placed against, rather than within, a strange, undefined background. Vaguely rural, as evidenced by the grapevines and the lush greens and golds of the landscape, this locale has often been identified as an area on the edge of Paris known as Little Poland. Yet Manet has eschewed any sign that might identify the setting with the Parisian suburbs. The resulting image has an air of tantalizing ambiguity that challenges the viewer to understand, even while the artist holds any obvious meaning just beyond reach. It is a ploy Manet used repeatedly in his art. One need think only of his shocking *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), painted the following year, in which he abandoned conventional narrative structures to focus more fully on the process of painting itself. As is often the case with Manet, his art presents more questions than easy answers.

This inscrutability no doubt played a part in *The Old Musician*'s later history. The painting was exhibited twice during Manet's lifetime. In March 1863 it joined thirteen others at an exhibition at the Galerie Martinet; it was shown again four years later when Manet mounted a one-man exhibition (at considerable personal expense) on the Avenue d'Alma bordering the grounds of the recently opened Exposition Universelle. On both occasions, the painting passed largely unnoticed, overshadowed by other, more provocative works such as *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and the scandalous *Olympia*, 1863 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). Nevertheless, *The Old Musician* seems to have held a special importance to Manet. When Manet sold twenty-four of his paintings to the dealer Charles Durand-Ruel in early 1872 (including *The Absinthe Drinker*, now under the title *Philosopher* in yet another change in identity), *The Old Musician* was not among them. Despite its enormous size, Manet kept this painting with him in his studio until his death on April 30, 1883.

The Old Musician was among the 159 works shown in the posthumous retrospective at the École des Beaux-

Fig. 5. Edouard Manet, *The Little Girl (La petite fille)*, 1862, etching and drypoint, state ii/ii, National Gallery of Art, Chester Dale Collection

Fig. 6. Installation photograph showing *The Old Musician* at the *Exposition des œuvres de Édouard Manet*, January 6–28, 1884, École Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Paris, Courtesy of the Department of Image Collections, National Gallery of Art Library

Arts in Paris in January 1884, which some 13,000 visitors attended (fig. 6). Although slated to be included in the sale of the artist's work at the Hôtel Drouot days later, it was withdrawn. The painting returned to the family, remaining with them until 1897, when it was purchased by Durand-Ruel. His involvement at this point in the painting's history is not surprising; a long-standing champion of the impressionists, he had also served as Manet's principal dealer during the artist's lifetime. The painting, however, proved a challenge to sell. Durand-Ruel initially targeted the English market, lending it to the inaugural exhibition of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers in London in 1898. In 1904, he sent the picture to Dublin as part of an exhibition at the Royal Hibernian Academy. Organized by the celebrated collector Hugh Lane, the exhibition was mounted in an effort to generate interest in the creation of a municipal museum of modern art, with the hope that the works on display would become the museum's core collection. The writer George Moore, speaking at the opening, said that Lane had asked him which of the two paintings by Manet on display, *The Old Musician* or *Portrait of Eva Gonzalès*, 1870 (National Gallery, London), he should purchase for the museum. "I am afraid whichever you choose you will regret you had not chosen the other," Moore warned, though he conceded that the portrait of Gonzalès "is what Dublin needs." The museum project stalled, but Lane did purchase the portrait for his personal collection. The following year *The Old Musician* returned to London as part of a now-legendary exhibition of impressionist masterpieces organized by Durand-Ruel at the Grafton Galleries. Two more exhibitions followed that year, one in The Hague and the second at the Salon d'Automne, where it was included as part of a retrospective of Manet's work. While his work was generally well received, including "the large and celebrated reunion of the 'Wandering Musicians,'" Manet was largely overshadowed by the provocative and brilliantly hued paintings of a group of young artists mockingly dubbed "the fauves."

"The Wandering Musicians" seemed to be living up to its epithet. In 1912 the painting traveled to Saint Petersburg and changed hands at least twice before finding what appeared to be a permanent home when it was purchased by the Österreichische Staatsgalerie (now Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna) in 1913. Its tenure there was short-lived, however. Ten years later, the museum decided to sell *The Old Musician* to the Galerie Barbazanges in exchange for two other French paintings: a portrait by Camille Corot and a nude by Auguste Renoir. Manet's masterpiece was set to wander once more.

In a shrewd bid to sell the painting, M. Hodebert, the director of the Galerie Barbazanges, turned his gaze to the United States. The American taste for modern French painting had been grow-

(continued on page 8)

Restoring a Favorite

The Old Musician was one of collector Chester Dale's most prized acquisitions, but perhaps the most popular work from his collection for visitors to the Gallery is Auguste Renoir's *A Girl with a Watering Can.* Representing the quintessential impressionist painting, it draws its appeal from the artist's colorful palette, energetic brushwork, and luminosity. However, the painting that the public admired for so long was not being seen to its best effect. The surface coating, which was added to the picture as a clear layer to saturate and deepen the intensity of the colors as well as to protect the surface from damage and dirt, had significantly darkened and yellowed with age and altered the appearance of the work. Earlier this year the decision was made to remove the varnish in the conservation studio and return the painting to its appearance as it left the artist's easel in 1876.

Each color was slowly and carefully tested under magnification, using small swabs to identify the solvent that could safely remove the coating without affecting the paint layer. As it turned out, certain areas—the blue coat and some reds in the plants—were more sensitive than others, and the choice of materials had to be adjusted to accommodate individual responses in specific areas of the painting.

The removal of the coating allowed the colors to reemerge as Renoir had applied them. The range of subtle tones of lavender, pale green, pink, and soft blue in the path behind the little girl had been obscured by the yellowed varnish. The vibrancy and energy of light and reflection in this area were hidden from the viewer. Covered by the yellowed varnish, the colors of the face and the hair merged into a uniform tone. Upon removal of the coating, however, the delicacy of the flesh reappeared and the rosy cheeks again contrasted with the blond curls. Even more transformational was the sense of depth and space that reemerged when the unifying veil of the discolored coating was lifted. As it aged, the varnish layer lost its transparency; it visually flattened out the forms and deadened the contours. The watering can blended into the coat because the yellow varnish over the blue coat created a tone that mimicked the green of the can. Equally hidden was the delicate brushwork of the decorative lace. Not only had the varnish turned the white lace yellow, but the energetic handling and textured impasto were masked by the thick coating that was embedded in the strokes of paint.

The final step of the conservation process was to apply a new coat of varnish. Today we use materials that will not discolor and that remain clear and even. Contemporary sources and Renoir's own correspondence reveal that he, unlike other impressionist artists such as Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro, preferred to have his paintings varnished when he completed a work. Some nineteenth-century artists were aware of the disadvantages of natural resin varnishes and were concerned about the potential for discoloration and the resulting distortion of the tonal relationships; others were interested in preserving the matte surfaces that were a sign of modernity. Renoir, though, was not drawn to this new aesthetic. He preferred a surface that appeared wet and glossy.

The goal of the conservator is to return a work to its original appearance, respecting the artist's intent throughout the process. By allowing the vibrant colors and brushwork to reemerge, conservation treatment has enabled the viewer to enjoy *A Girl with a Watering Can* again as the artist painted it.

Auguste Renoir, *A Girl with a Watering Can,* 1876, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Chester Dale Collection, during conservation treatment

ing steadily since the end of the nineteenth century, and by the 1920s, the United States was home to a number of the world's most prominent collectors. Among them was Dr. Albert Barnes, who had amassed one of the most impressive private collections of modern art in America. In 1925, Hodebert sent *The Old Musician* to the newly opened Barnes Foundation in the hope that the painting might tempt Barnes, but to no avail. In August, the painting was returned to Hodebert's possession.

Ultimately, it was another renowned American collector, Chester Dale, who was to acquire the painting. According to his unpublished memoirs, Dale first saw the painting in 1927 or 1928 at the Galerie Barbazanges in Paris. As yet unframed, *The Old Musician* was carried into the room by five or six men, and Dale knew instantly that he was in the presence of a work that was both beautiful and important. "It was a magnificent picture," Dale recalled, "and Mrs. Dale was wildly enthusiastic about it, as was I. I had no more thought of buying it than I did of buying the Palace of Versailles." No doubt the price tag—a cool quarter million dollars—played a significant role in Dale's reaction. In a stroke of ingenuity Hodebert gave instructions that the painting be shown to the Dales any time they liked. As they were regular visitors to the gallery, they had the opportunity to see it on a number of occasions. Dale himself later remarked somewhat wryly that "there was no stopping the men from bringing the picture and putting it down before us."

Hodebert's gambit eventually succeeded. Repeated viewings confirmed Dale's original assessment of the work's merit, as did his wife Maud's opinion

Fig. 7. Photograph of Manet's *The Old Musician* on view in Chester Dale's home, Courtesy of the Department of Image Collections, National Gallery of Art Library

that it was one of the two greatest paintings by Manet in existence (the other was *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*), but it was not until about two years later that Dale decided to acquire the work. By Dale's own recollections, the decision was sudden, made unexpectedly one April morning over breakfast in New York, but once it was made, he pursued the painting with his habitual zeal. He called his art agent Etienne Bignou in Paris—a true extravagance at the time given the expense of transatlantic telephone calls—and charged him to make a six-figure offer, in cash, to Hodebert. Bignou balked; the bid was less than half the price Hodebert had quoted initially, but Dale was adamant, stating that "no bid for cash in six figures can be laughed off especially now after the 1929 crash." Dale, who had a knack for making deals, upped the ante even further by announcing that the offer was on the table for only twenty-four hours, a strategy he would employ to great effect on more than one occasion. George Keller, director of the Galerie Georges Petit and a former associate of Hodebert, was dispatched to Hodebert's château in Normandy bearing the offer, only to discover that Hodebert had suffered a stroke the night before. Despite his initial reluctance, Hodebert eventually acquiesced and agreed to sell. Unfortunately Hodebert owned only a one-third interest in the painting, which Dale would not learn until after the fact, and nearly a month passed before Bignou was able to negotiate the purchase from the other shareholders.

The painting now belonged to Dale, but several months passed again before he took possession of it. At the time of its purchase, the painting was not in Paris but on loan to the Neue Pinakothek in Munich. The museum had already arranged to extend the loan for another year and was not pleased; this situation required additional negotiations by Keller on Dale's behalf. It proved to be the first of many obstacles on the journey. The picture, which had been shipped from Paris to London, was placed on the freighter *American Farmer* for its transatlantic journey. The ship, however, collided with another vessel in the Atlantic and was forced to return to Southampton, where the painting, thankfully undamaged, was transferred to another ship bound for the United States. It arrived in New York, delayed but unharmed. Dale quickly encountered another unexpected problem: the work was simply too big to fit in his penthouse apartment in the Carlyle Hotel. Yet he found an ideal solution. He sent the painting to the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a long-term loan. Prominently displayed and lauded in the press—*The New Yorker* pronounced it "one of the most important Manets in the world"—it was on view there until September 1934, when Dale finally installed it in his sumptuous new townhouse at 20 East Seventy-ninth Street (fig. 7). The painting remained there for the next seven years before moving to even more prestigious quarters: the National Gallery of Art.

Fig. 8. *The Old Musician* on view in the West Building, Main Floor, Gallery 88, c. 1941, National Gallery of Art, Gallery Archives

The Dales' association with the National Gallery began in May 1940 when Director David Finley and Chief Curator John Walker called upon the couple in the hopes of securing a gift or even a loan for the new institution. The Gallery's holdings of nineteenth-century French paintings were weak, and the Dales' collection was one of the most exceptional then in private hands. Initially, the Dales agreed only to lend seven American paintings when the Gallery opened its doors in March 1941, but eight months later an additional group of twenty-five nineteenth-century French paintings was lent to the museum. *The Old Musician* was the centerpiece of the display (fig. 8).

Fig. 9. *The Old Musician* before conservation treatment

"The big Manet canvas, *The Traveling Musicians* [*sic*] looks very well in its new lodging place," reported the art critic Henry McBride in the *New York Sun*, further noting that "it now has such generous space around it—which it needs—that it will probably consent to stay on indefinitely where it is." It was a wish that was fervently shared by the public and Gallery officials, though there were no guarantees where the strong-willed Dales were concerned.

For the next two decades the ultimate fate of *The Old Musician* and the rest of the Dale collection remained uncertain. Not surprisingly, the National Gallery was not the only institution vying for the coveted prize. Although Dale made additional loans to the National Gallery as well as several gifts beginning in 1942, long-term loans to other institutions—the Art Institute of Chicago, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art—gave little indication about the eventual disposition of the collection. While works of art shifted among Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, *The Old Musician* remained firmly ensconced in the National Gallery, a steady presence during this otherwise turbulent time. In the end, the wish vocalized by McBride in 1941 became reality; on his death in December 1962, Dale bequeathed the bulk of his beloved collection, including his many long-term loans, to the National Gallery. *The Old Musician* had come to rest at last.

Over the decades, a natural discoloration of the varnish took place, making the painting look dark and somber,

Fig. 10. X-radiograph of *The Old Musician*

and very different from when it was painted a century and a half earlier (fig. 9). When it became clear that *The Old Musician* had changed, the Gallery acted on its continuing responsibility to maintain the collection in the best possible condition and moved forward with treatment to restore the work.

The painting was originally varnished with a clear natural resin coating, but over time the coating yellowed and subsequent layers of varnish were added to enhance the appearance of the painting without major intervention. Every application deposited another film on the surface that obscured and deadened the colors and altered the intended sense of space and depth. The intense sky had become a greenish gray, the whites appeared yellow, and the range of blues was narrowed. The browns lost their warmth, and the blacks, which Manet applied with all the richness and intensity of the Spanish masters he admired, appeared green and translucent. The yellowed coating veiled the varied texture of the brushwork. The painting did not even resemble the masterpiece Chester Dale described to his wife Maud as having "unusual color," as opposed to other works by Manet from this period that were "rather on the muddy side."

Cleaning tests revealed that the original tones had essentially been embalmed beneath the thick application of multiple surface coatings, and as the layers were lifted, the colors emerged as they had first appeared. It is very likely that the painting had never been cleaned or "spruced up," unusual for a work of this importance and for one that had changed hands

Fig. 11. Detail of little girl from *The Old Musician*

so frequently, though it had been lined as early as 1883. In addition to regaining the original palette, the cleaning allowed the energy of the brushwork and the range of textures to reemerge as inappropriate varnish was removed from the interstices of the paint strokes and the rich and vibrant impasto reappeared. Removing the discolored coating also allowed the remarkable sense of space and distance to expand again. When the yellowed coating had obscured the composition, the figures read as if they were lined up in a frieze. Now, the depth behind them has been regained, along with a much more defined foreground and middle ground. Each figure has acquired a sense of fullness, and the contours are defined with greater clarity. The immediacy of the artist's touch has been restored.

In addition to cleaning the painting, the conservation treatment included a full technical investigation. X-radiography and infrared imaging were done in the conservation studio in an attempt to learn more about Manet's process of painting. Both techniques allowed the conservator to identify changes to the composition below the paint surface. Because Manet did not make preliminary drawings, he worked out his thoughts, alterations, and developments on the canvas. Some of these appear as pentimenti to the naked eye, and some are implied by the clues left from impasto of an initial layer that had dried and appeared beneath the top layers as a disruption in the paint. The x-radiograph, however, provided the most significant information. Alterations to the little girl became apparent. She was initially depicted in full profile with detailed facial features, her hair pulled back in a tight bun, and her forehead exposed (figs. 10, 11). Her costume was redesigned as well, and Manet reduced her height when he scraped out the original black shoes and left her barefoot. He reinvented her identity by contrasting her dirty feet with those of her companions, who are all wearing shoes.

It is evident that Manet used *The Absinthe Drinker* (see fig. 2) as the source for the top-hatted character in *The Old Musician*. With computer imaging and by overlaying outlines traced on transparent film, it became clear that one figure exactly matches the other. Manet must have traced the image from *The Absinthe Drinker*, which remained in his studio when he was painting *The Old Musician*, to import the figure into his composition.

Very likely Manet conceived of the original composition as a tight semicircle of four—the old musician and three children—and subsequently placed beside them the gentleman in the top hat, awkwardly posed, neither standing nor seated and oddly floating in the landscape. To remedy the awkwardness Manet may have added the man with the turban at the far right, literally and figuratively grounding the adjacent man. The results of pigment analysis substantiated the hypothesis that these two characters on the right were later additions. X-ray fluorescence investigation identified the predominant white pigment in the flesh of the two figures on the right as zinc white; in the other four, the flesh tones were painted in lead white. This finding supports the visual evidence that the figures were applied at different times. More zinc white was located at the nape of the neck of the little girl and on parts of her feet, suggesting that the alterations to the girl were made at the same time as the two men were included.

The investigation into the construction of the painting and the handling of paint has confirmed that Manet's painting technique was complex, that he specifically selected and layered his colors, and that he skillfully manipulated his brush to build on his under-

tones. As much as the artist may have wanted his technique to appear effortless, the layers are complicated and the reworking extensive. Often he intentionally exposed the process of painting and allowed the viewer some insight into the development of his work. Superficially, Manet implied that his application was spontaneous and quick, but careful investigation and intimate examination of the painting allow us to see the more studied side of his technique.

Over the years *The Old Musician* won many admirers, among them the painter Diego Rivera. In a letter to his friend and patron Chester Dale, he praised this work, which for him embodied "the affirmation of the originality and independence of the Master as well as his strength in breaking all standards in the search for new possibilities to express beauty." Now, restored to its original glory, a new generation of viewers will have the opportunity to experience Manet's early masterpiece in an entirely new light.

The Old Musician—A Time Line

1862 Edouard Manet paints *The Old Musician.*

1863 The painting is exhibited, along with thirteen other paintings by the artist, at the Galerie Martinet, Paris, in March.

1867 Manet mounts a one-man exhibition on the Avenue de l'Alma to coincide with the opening of the Exposition Universelle in Paris in May. Fifty works are shown, including *The Old Musician.*

1883 Manet dies on April 30.

1884 The painting is exhibited in the posthumous Manet retrospective held at the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, in January. Although it is initially included in the auction of the artist's estate in February, it is withdrawn prior to the sale.

1897 The painting is purchased by the dealer Durand-Ruel, with whom it remains until at least 1905.

1898 The picture is shown in the first exhibition of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers, London, organized under the direction of James McNeill Whistler.

1904 The Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, includes the painting in an exhibition.

1905 The picture is included in three major exhibitions: at the Grafton Galleries in London; at the Pulchri Studio in The Hague; and at the Salon d'Automne in Paris, where it is shown as part of a retrospective devoted to Manet.

1912 The painting is exhibited in Saint Petersburg.

1913 The Österreichische Staatsgalerie (now Österreichische Galerie Belvedere), Vienna, purchases *The Old Musician.*

1923 The Österreichische Staatsgalerie releases the painting to Galerie Barbazanges, Paris, in exchange for two paintings, one by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot and the other by Auguste Renoir.

1925 The painting is on loan to the Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania, presumably as a potential acquisition.

1928 *The Old Musician* is shown in exhibitions in Amsterdam and Berlin.

1930 The painting is on display in Germany, first in Düsseldorf and then in Munich. In May, it is purchased by Chester Dale, who lends it to the exhibition *Cent ans de peinture française* at the Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, the following month. Upon its arrival in America, Dale places the work on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

1932 The painting is included in Manet's centennial exhibition held at the Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris. This is the last time it will be seen outside the United States.

1934 The painting is installed in Dale's new residence on 20 East Seventy-ninth Street in Manhattan.

1941 Dale sends twenty-five French paintings, including *The Old Musician,* to the National Gallery of Art in November on indefinite loan.

1962 Dale dies in December and bequeaths the bulk of his personal collection to the National Gallery of Art, including *The Old Musician.*

2006 Treatment of the painting begins in October.

2009 The restored painting is reinstalled in the nineteenth-century French galleries in May.